

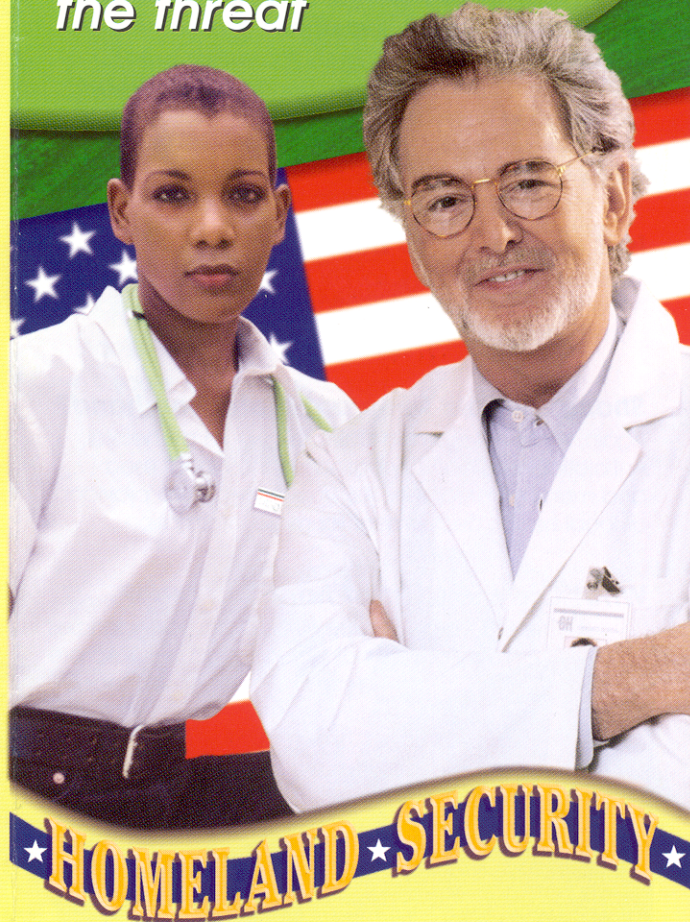
Bioterrorism

***—Understanding
the threat***

Compliments of:

DISASTER & EMERGENCY SERVICES

YELLOWSTONE COUNTY COURTHOUSE
BILLINGS, MONTANA



What is bioterrorism?

It's the intentional release of harmful bacteria, viruses or germs (called agents).

Bioterrorism, like all forms of terrorism, aims to:

- injure or kill people
- cause panic and fear
- disrupt daily routines.

But bioterrorism is also different from other forms of terrorism.

Unlike other attacks, a biological attack could take days or weeks to notice. By that time, many people may be affected.



What can we do?

Stay alert. This helps reduce the risk. And stay calm if an attack occurs. This helps government agencies control the situation and protect you.

The publisher has taken care in the preparation of this folder, but the information it contains is not intended as a substitute for the expertise and judgment of qualified health-care professionals. You should consult with your health-care provider about all health-care issues.

The persons whose pictures are depicted are models. Any characters they are portraying are fictional.

Biological agents

include, but are not limited to:

Anthrax

Anthrax spores may be spread by direct skin contact or through the air. Some symptoms of cutaneous (skin) anthrax include itching and boils. Symptoms of inhalation anthrax may be similar to the flu but without congestion. Anthrax is not contagious (spread from person to person).

Smallpox

Smallpox could be spread through the air. The first symptoms usually include a high fever, fatigue and body aches. These are usually followed by a rash, about 2-3 days later. This rash is generally most noticeable on the face, legs and arms. Smallpox is contagious and victims need to be isolated.

Botulism

Botulism may be spread through the air or by contaminated food. Symptoms include trouble seeing, breathing or swallowing. It is not contagious.

Tularemia

Tularemia is spread through the air. Symptoms are similar to the flu. It is not known to be contagious.

Plague

Plague can be spread by infected fleas on rodents, or through the air. Symptoms include trouble seeing, breathing or swallowing. Plague is contagious.



Federal, state and local health-care and law-enforcement agencies are forming plans to deal with these and other agents.

Be prepared.

An attack would most likely happen without warning. But there are ways to help reduce the risk of an attack.

Stay alert,

especially in public places.

- Report packages or bags left unattended or anyone acting suspiciously.
- Know the location of emergency exits.
- Never accept a package from a stranger.

Follow the rules

in airports, tourist sites and other public places. Read all warnings.



Prepare a home readiness kit.

You may be required to stay in your home if an attack occurs. Some items to have on hand include a:

- 3-day supply of water and ready-to-eat food
- first-aid kit, including medications and prescription information
- portable radio and extra batteries.

Know where emergency shelters are located if you are required to evacuate. Also, make a disaster plan that includes how to contact all family members in an emergency.

If an attack takes place...

Remain calm.

Government agencies will work hard to keep you safe. Remaining calm will help things run smoothly—and help keep you and your family safe.

Listen for and follow instructions.

- Local authorities will give instructions. Listen to reliable radio or TV reports. Don't believe rumors.
- Government agencies act in the public's best interests. Follow their instructions, including whether to stay home, leave the area or go to an emergency shelter.
- If you're at work, follow your emergency or escape plan.



Use common sense.

Terrorists most often choose targets of national importance. It is unlikely that you would be the personal target of a terrorist attack.



Some common questions and answers

Could an agent be spread in a public water supply?

It's possible, but unlikely. Several factors make this unlikely. For example, an agent would most likely be too diluted to have much effect, if any (unless a vast amount were used). Also, most of the public water supply is filtered and treated.

Is it necessary to buy a gas mask?

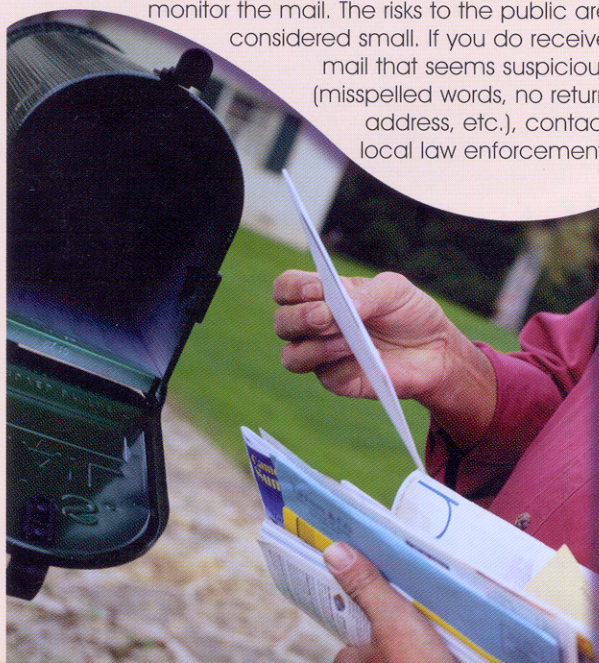
Most experts don't think so. For it to help, you would have to wear it during the attack—and most attacks come without warning.

Should people keep antibiotics on hand?

Again, most experts don't think this would be helpful. Antibiotics needed vary based on the agent used and many other factors. Ask your health-care provider or local health department for more information.

What are the risks of handling mail?

The U.S. Postal Service and other mail agencies monitor the mail. The risks to the public are considered small. If you do receive mail that seems suspicious (misspelled words, no return address, etc.), contact local law enforcement.



Learn more.

A lot of uncertainty comes with the threat of terrorism. Being aware is a big step toward feeling in control.

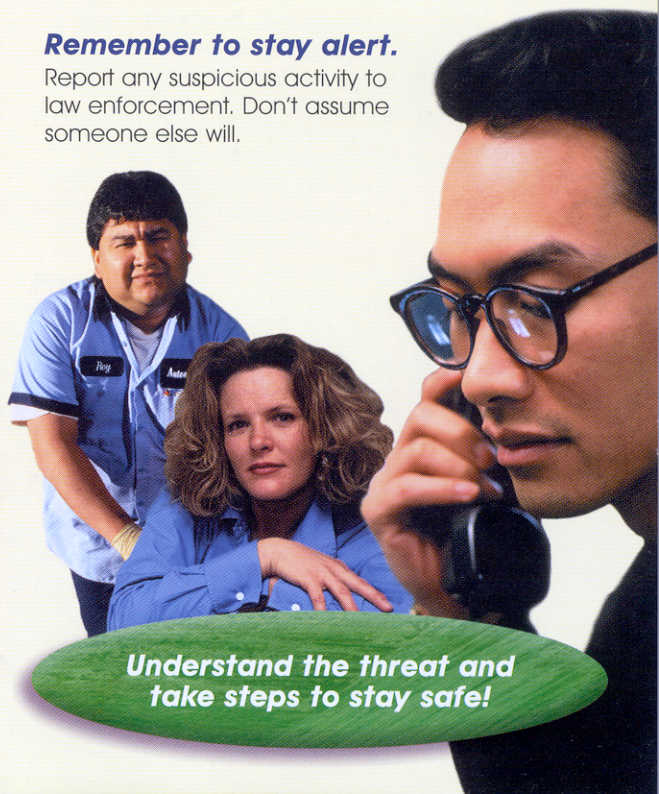
Use reliable sources of information.

To learn more about bioterrorism, contact:

- your local or state health department or emergency management agency
- the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
—www.bt.cdc.gov
—1-888-246-2675 (English)
—1-888-246-2857 (Spanish)
- the Johns Hopkins University's Center for Biodefense Studies
—www.hopkins-biodefense.org
- the Office of Homeland Security
—www.whitehouse.gov/homeland
- the Federal Emergency Management Agency
—www.fema.gov.

Remember to stay alert.

Report any suspicious activity to law enforcement. Don't assume someone else will.



Understand the threat and take steps to stay safe!